

**Panel Title:** Amplifying Indigenous Literature and Activism

**Panel Abstract:** This year's conference proposal asks how can we "listen to and amplify voices that have historically been silenced or ignored due to marginalization in its many forms?" As Dawn Quigley (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) discusses in her 2016 essay "Silenced: Voices Taken from American Indian Characters in Children's Literature," Indigenous voices continue to be silenced, including in K-12 classrooms dominated by inaccurate, destructive white-authored books about Indigenous people in which the American Indian characters literally do not speak. In contrast, this panel amplifies Indigenous authors, stories, and approaches to activism. Come listen.

Panelists: Zara Rix, Martha Viehmann, and Mandy Suhr-Sytsma

\*Rix and Viehmann will be submitting their final abstracts separately. We would greatly appreciate it our panel abstract and each of our three individual paper abstracts could be published on the conference website. Thank you!

**Panelist #3: Mandy Suhr-Sytsma**

**Paper 3 Title:** Who is Activism For? Indigenous Resurgence in *Give Me Some Truth* and *The Marrow Thieves*

**Paper 3 Abstract:** In the 2018 YA novel *Give Me Some Truth* by Eric Gansworth (Onondaga), Tuscarora protagonist, Carson, leads a protest against a racist white restaurant owner. The protest fails to change the behavior of the man or his white customers. And these aren't the only white characters who disparage, dismiss, and/or exploit their American Indian neighbors. In fact, unlike in *If I Ever Get Out of Here* (2013), Gansworth's earlier YA novel set in this same world, *Give Me Some Truth* places very little emphasis on positive white/Indigenous relationships. The 2017 dystopian YA novel *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline (Georgian Bay Métis community) is even more pessimistic about the possibility of changing the colonialist ways of white individuals and institutions. This book focuses on the experiences of a group of Indigenous people in a future version of Canada who are literally being hunted by colonizers who want to exploit and then destroy them. Beyond simply acknowledging the refreshing lack of nice white people in these books, I draw on the work of Indigenous scholars, including Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, Alderville First Nation) and Kahente Horn-Miller (Kanien:keha'ka/Mohawk), to read these novels as depicting and contributing to what Simpson terms "resurgence," the holistic rebuilding of Indigenous communities from within. Activism in *Give Me Some Truth* and *The Marrow Thieves* may fail to change colonial reality, but it succeeds in empowering Indigenous individuals and communities. These characters should inspire our admiration and allyship along with our empathy.